



Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona

NEWS RELEASE

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WIFA Chairman Owens Announces Grant for Arsenic Remediation Coalition

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PHOENIX – Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona's Chairman and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens today announced a \$50,000 grant to the Arsenic Remediation Coalition LLC to help Arizona's 287 small water systems meet the Environmental Protection Agency's safe drinking water standard for arsenic by Jan. 23, 2006.

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The new federal standard of 10 parts per billion requires Arizona's 1,100 public water systems to adjust their treatment and testing procedures from the previous standard of 50 ppb. The standard is a significant challenge to water systems in Arizona, where arsenic occurs naturally in soil and groundwater at concentrations ranging from 10 to 200 ppb. Arizona's small water systems rely primarily on groundwater as their drinking water source and have limited resources to bring their systems into compliance.

"Water systems need to begin taking steps now to meet the new federal arsenic standard by 2006," Owens said. "The Arsenic Remediation Coalition can help bring Arizona systems one step closer to achieving compliance."

The coalition's plan to help small water systems includes:

- Creating a clearing house of arsenic treatment technologies and vendors by using the results of pilot projects and other technical resources;
- Assisting in publicizing the need for arsenic treatment;
- Mentoring and sharing the expertise and experiences of arsenic remediation among public and private water systems;
- Assisting in seeking loans, leasing arrangements and rate approvals for arsenic compliance;
- Coordinating the ARC's program with regulating agencies.

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“The Arsenic Remediation Coalition allows the state’s small water systems to get started down the right path to compliance by 2006,” said WIFA Executive Director Jay Spector. “By working together and learning from one another, smaller water systems will expedite the amount of time they spend on learning the steps to remediation and instead be able to hit the ground running.”

“The grant from WIFA for the Arsenic Remediation Coalition will help in our providing assistance to water systems particularly those in rural areas,” said the Arsenic Remediation Coalition’s manager Douglas C. Nelson, Ph.D.

ARC’s initial members include Big Park Water Company, Camp Verde Water System, Cottonwood Water Works, Inc., Litchfield Park Service Co., Little Park Water Company, Rio Verde Utilities and Valley Utilities Water Company. Any privately-owned or publicly-owned water system may participate in and receive services from ARC.

The Water Utilities Association of Arizona is helping to fund the Arsenic Remediation Coalition, and the Arizona Small Utilities Association is providing assistance.

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